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INFO RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN IMMEDIATE 1302
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE 7707
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE 9255
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ AUG 8884
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE 5345
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE 9890
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 0572
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 1065
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO IMMEDIATE 5936
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHBO/USMILGP BOGOTA CO IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 006290

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: GOC AND FARC MANEUVER ON HUMANITARIAN EXCHANGE
DISCUSSIONS

REF: BOGOTA 6186

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer.
Reason: 1.4 (b,d)

11. (U) Summary: FARC spokesperson Raul Reyes insisted the GOC create a demilitarized zone ("despeje") for a humanitarian exchange of FARC-held hostages. GOC officials firmly rejected a despeje, but said the GOC would consider new proposals to achieve a humanitarian exchange. End summary.

12. (U) In an August 26 interview in an Argentine daily, FARC spokesperson Raul Reyes welcomed Venezuelan President Chavez' August 19 offer of Venezuela as a possible site for talks on a humanitarian exchange, but said any exchange "must be resolved within Colombia (reftel). This would require the GOC to accept the FARC demand that the GOC demilitarize Florida and Pradera municipalities in Valle de Cauca department. Still, Reyes said negotiations on an exchange could be held "anywhere." Colombian Communist Party leader Carlos Lozano interpreted Reyes' latter comment as the FARC "opening the door" to Chavez to help find a new formula for negotiations.

13. (U) Minister of Interior and Justice Carlos Holguin said Reyes' response highlighted the FARC's intransigence. He said the GOC would be willing to consider new ways to achieve a humanitarian exchange, but would never accept a despeje. Meanwhile, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Andres Arias is leading what El Tiempo, Bogota's largest daily newspaper, called an "anti-despeje crusade." Arias traveled to Florida and Pradera on August 24 to bolster local opposition to a despeje. He joined local officials in condemning the idea and distributed tee shirts reading "No to Despeje." Arias was accompanied by senior Uribe advisor and speechwriter Jose Obdulio Gaviria.

14. (C) Outgoing Department of Administrative Security (DAS) director Andres Penate told us August 24 he expects Chavez' intervention to fail. Uribe remains opposed to a despeje and will also insist that any released FARC fighters not return to combat. Penate thinks the FARC will not accept these conditions. He explained that Uribe authorized Senator Cordoba to be an intermediary with the FARC on an accord

because he felt increasingly "on the ropes" over this issue. Uribe thought authorizing Cordoba would help neutralize international and domestic pressure, but was surprised when Cordoba asked Chavez to become involved.

Nichols